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The ethics of freedom

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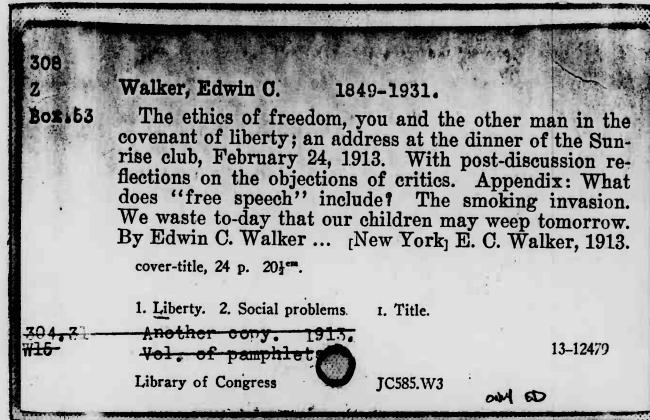
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THE ETHICS OF FREEDOM

YOU AND THE OTHER MAN IN THE COVENANT OF LIBERTY

An Address at the Dinner of The Sunrise Club, February
24, 1913. With Post-Discussion Reflections on
the Objections of Critics.

Appendix: What Does "Free Speech" Include? The
Smoking Invasion. We Waste To-day That Our
Children May Weep To-morrow.

BY EDWIN C. WALKER

The conception and the facts of liberty and slavery result from association, not isolation, and the sparseness or density of population, the simplicity or complexity of association, create the customs, rules, and laws governing human relations. Therefore, what the solitary man rightfully may do is no measure of what he rightfully may do when he comes into contact with another man. The liberty of one is conditioned by the liberty of the other.

New York: April 15, 1913

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YOU AND THE OTHER MAN IN THE COVENANT
OF LIBERTY.

The basis of this talk is the thought that the best development of social life is possible only where there is free play for individual activities, and that this free play is denied equally by organized and unorganized invasion, the former condoned by the extreme governmentalist, the latter by the extreme individualist, and both by the careless and indifferent of all classes.

The method of this presentation is definition supported by copious illustration. Men and women will subscribe enthusiastically to abstract principles and yet never recognize them when they come face to face with concrete facts, with actions, particularly their own actions. I remember that years ago I met a Quaker in Pennsylvania who declared himself strongly in favor of the complete separation of Church and State, and yet I soon found him vigorously defending Sunday laws, the exemption of church property from taxation, Bible in the schools, and chaplains in official places. His abstract platform could not stand the test of particularization, of illustration. He was not alone; and there are millions like him now, some of them being here to-night.

Deep down within you, when you cry aloud for liberty, do you really mean the liberty of Jones? (your name being Smith).

What do you understand the word "liberty" to mean, for others no less than for yourself?

These key questions show that you and I are confronted at once with the problem of definition, one usually evaded in stump oratory.

Only where there are two or more persons is the question of liberty raised. Where there are more than one person, no single member of the group rightfully may decide any matter directly affecting one or more of the others, except when that power of the other or others is distinctly delegated to him. The first of these truisms will not be challenged by anyone. But the second, altho the complement of the first, is continually overlooked, disregarded, or denied, and on the rock of this deficient vision, deficient ethic, or deficient thinking the social ship is ever in danger of wrecking itself.

Where there is but one there is neither liberty nor slavery. Where there are more than one there may be despotism (sometimes called "government," sometimes "absolute liberty") for one or more and liberty for one or more or there may be approximate equal liberty for all.

In a word, the conception and the facts of liberty and slavery result from association, not isolation, and the sparseness or density of population, the simplicity or complexity of association, will create the customs, rules, and laws governing human relations. Therefore, what the solitary man rightfully may do is no measure of what he rightfully may do when he comes into contact with another man. The liberty of one is conditioned by the liberty of the other.

Thomas Paine wrote these words in "The Crisis": "The Grecians and the Romans were strongly possessed of the *spirit* of liberty but *not the principle*, for at the time they were determined not to be slaves themselves, they employed their power to enslave the rest of mankind."

In a sense, these words constitute my text. I wish to indicate, as clearly as I can, that we are too much like the Greeks and Romans of whom Paine complained; that, while we do not lack the spirit of liberty, the desire to have freedom for ourselves, we do not have a very definite idea of the principles of liberty, and in our lives, whatever our social creeds may be, we are very apt to apply to our neighbors a severity in the definition of liberty that none of us would dream of applying to him- or herself. It is not difficult to demand what we conceive to be our rights, but it requires some study to determine what *are* our rights and some self-control to recognize—in practice—the equal rights of others. It is

quite easy to talk, to organize, to vote against the privileges possessed by others and their deprivation of which would cost us nothing, probably would be to our direct advantage. All *that* the spirit of liberty impels us to do, just as it impels the Dyak chief to hunt for the heads of his enemies. The test of our knowledge, of the principles of liberty, and of our intention to live our knowledge, comes when we are asked individually to cease intruding upon the comfort, safety, property, and health of our neighbors. Here we do not have to bring a majority to our way of thinking before reform can be accomplished; concert of action is not necessary; each of us, for him- or herself, can be a practicing propagandist of the gospel of equal liberty.

How most if not all of us offend, in one direction or another, will be indicated incidentally by the illustrations that I present later of the definition of liberty given in the beginning. We come now to this elaboration.

The kind of equal liberty possible is determined by environment. It is not a matter of guesswork, of intuition; it is not indicated by the undisciplined spirit of mastership which sometimes expresses itself to-day in the demand for "absolute" freedom. It is to be ascertained by the activities of brain and tested by ethics, ethics here meaning the conception of fair play, of the nearest possible equality of opportunity. For equal liberty means simply fair play.

Of course "equal liberty" does not mean equal liberty to invade, to rob, to tyrannize, to indulge in "self-expression" careless of the thus-denied self-expression of others, as careless or unbalanced thinkers sometimes have said, but equal freedom from invasion, from robbery, from the exactions of tyranny. Fair play (liberty) cannot exist in the atmosphere of absolutism, whether the absolutism be that of Tsar, majority, or lawless individual outside of formal government.

The drunken cowboy racing across the plains is legally free, and perhaps morally free, if none is dependent on him, but if he has dependents, then the community where they reside and may become public charges thru his weakness rightfully has something to say concerning the traffic partly or wholly to blame for his irresponsibility and inefficiency. But his condition becomes acutely the concern of others,

whether he has or has not dependents, if he tries to become a locomotive engineer, a chauffeur, or a caretaker of gasolene in a factory. There his drinking habits would make him as distinctly a menace to property, limbs, and life as he would be were he defective in vision or hearing or were an epileptic, and to safeguard the equal liberty of others he must be denied such kinds of employment. If employers will not put up the bars against him, then the State is amply justified in compelling them to use such necessary caution.

Another application: The man on the bronko, riding from mountain range to mountain range, is "absolutely" free only so long as he is alone; one other man riding the route makes his only an equal liberty. If there is only enough water for one at the drinking hole where they meet, there must be accommodation or war. So if they meet in a narrow path on the cliff-side. Thus rules, customs, laws arise out of society, and they increase in number and complexity as the two become ten, ten hundred, ten thousand, ten million. Customs, habits antedate formal laws. Primitive superstitions and folk-ways survive, and persist thru the mutations and death of the great organized superstitions that we call world religions and the mighty machines of secular power that we name governments. And always the struggle, open or disguised, is between the ideal of irresponsible "absolute" liberty for some and the ideal of responsible equal liberty for all. That is the issue to-day no less than it was the issue thousands and tens of thousands of years ago when the great ruthless egoists of Rome and Persia, of Assyria and Babylon and Phoenicia held their worlds in the hollows of their bloody hands.

It is an ancient shibboleth of wrong that "a man may do as he pleases with his own," now usually meaning his own property only, tho formerly his wife and children were included among the other objects of the dictum. But the environment is to decide here, as it does in regard to the other factors that go into the making or marring of equal liberty. The isolated farmer may burn soft coal, without a consumer, and if he can stand the smoke it is an individual concern. But the farmer become a manufacturer in the city may not turn into the common atmosphere those dense masses of gas and soot; he may *not* rightfully do as he pleases with his

own, for thereby he denies the equal liberty of his fellows.

A man may smoke a cigar or pipe when alone or with others who concur, but when he does this on the crowded street or in public places he has become a trespasser, a denier of equal liberty, one who does not understand or does not care what are the principles of liberty. He acts in the spirit of his own liberty, to do as he blazes pleases and to Gehenna with the equal liberty of those who prefer to sophisticate their own air, if it is to be sophisticated at all.

The rancher rightfully may do as he pleases with his own, provided: He must not turn his cattle into his neighbors' crops, or permit noxious weeds to grow on his borders to scatter their seeds on adjacent lands, or allow the carcass of one of his animals to pollute the common atmosphere, or do a score of other things that deny the equal liberty of persons who are directly concerned.

The householder in his own isolated home may without indulge in unnecessary noise at all hours of the day and night, let water leak down from the upper to the lower floors, obstruct fire-escapes, and beat rugs and carpets from the upper windows; but when he becomes the occupant of a flat or apartment where others live he can do none of these things without intruding, without denying the equal liberty, without menacing the health of his neighbors; and some of them he cannot do without jeopardizing lives as well.

The parent thinks he may do as he pleases with his money, but he uses it invasively, denying the rights of scores or hundreds or thousands, when he uses it to purchase explosives or horns, gives them to his children, and turns the children loose in the streets armed with these instruments of torture.

The earner of a hundred or a thousand dollars may do as he sees fit therewith, but he must not see fit to hire an incendiary to set fire to a house or barn, or use it to bribe a legislator to vote against a bill which is in the interest of the people, or for one that would spoil the people to the enrichment of the appropriators of the common heritage. A man may destroy every growing thing in his own garden, but he is a thief or a vandal if he takes or destroys the flowers and shrubbery in a public park or highway.

As already so often said, conditions determine whether

or not an act is invasive, is denial of equality of liberty. A man walking along a lonely country road may without offense carry his umbrella horizontally or his surveyor's tripod with the dangerous sharp points preceding him. But if he does this on the streets of a city he is criminally negligent and justly subject to restraint. He may throw down a lighted match or an unextinguished stub of a cigar or a cigarette on a dirt road or a pavement or over the rail of a boat, but again he is criminally negligent if he does this in a room or the hall of a house or in a stable or in the woods, and should be held responsible, if detected, for any untoward consequences resulting from his callousness.

Says Richard T. Ely: "Such a thing as an *absolute* right of property never has existed and never will exist." And this is equally true, of course, of liberty. "Absolute" means "independent, free from limitations, dependence, or relations." As shown, liberty is not independent of conditions; it is limited in any case by the equal liberty of all who are involved in the status or transaction; it is dependent upon the simplicity or complexity of society, and it is related, in the case of each man, woman, and child to the lives and activities of hundreds, thousands, or millions of other men, women, and children.

Just here it should be pointed out that it is not sufficient to say that an action which "directly affects" another to his injury comes under the ban of the principle of equal freedom. To be thus inhibited, it must both directly and invasively affect the victim. To illustrate: Two inventors are striving to devise a machine that will do a certain work better and more economically than it is done with the existing mechanism. To the successful man will come fame and money. It is manifest that the success of one will directly affect and injure the other. But there is no invasion if both have unhindered access to the stores of knowledge and material, if there is no unfair play, no denial of equality of opportunity.

To give security to all in the enjoyment of equal liberty, there must be protection against cunning, fraud, overreaching, not less than against physical violence. If you hold that it is only justice to protect the child or the cripple against the brute force of the degenerate or the thug, can you logically

demur when it is affirmed that it is also justice to protect the mentally slow or credulous against the cunning of the bank-wrecker or the fake-mine operator? If you safeguard a man's bodily fallibility, why not his mental fallibility? Physique and brain are each a part of the man, and every argument that puts one part of him under the guardianship of his better equipped associates is equally operative to put the other part of him under the same guardianship. We all recognize the justice and necessity of this guardianship when he is imbecile or insane. Why not recognize this justice and necessity when he is so little short of one or the other of these states that he has no defense within himself against the harpies whose livelihood depends on his helplessness?

Now a paradox—a digression that is not a digression:

The Anarchist, Socialist, Land Value Taxer, each tells the Meliorist that he is wasting time and energy in the endeavor to palliate the evils flowing from the denial of equal liberty; just take hold and carry to triumph one of these movements—of course which one depends on who is talking—and there will be no further use for the Meliorist. Perhaps, but in the meantime are we to do no preventive or healing work on a somewhat less extensive scale? If we do not, what becomes of our heritage at the present rate of destruction? What of the poisoned bodies and wrecked brains of those now here? No, friends with the panaceas, your atmosphere of theories is too rare for me, even when the theory is so reasonable—with limitations—as is that of the Single Tax. Nature gave me a mental make-up that is at least slightly sensitive to facts, to this-day facts, and so I am compelled to insist that it is not wholly foolish to require all ships to be equipped with wireless apparatus some years before the full establishment of Socialism; that it is quite excusable to have a plentiful supply of water and a good fire department and numerous exits from theatres and factories and schools and halls at least a few months before Land Value Taxation is attained. And good milk right now would not be wholly a calamity. (We need the best of health to make the most of whichever of these plans of social salvation we finally decide to accept and push to success). And parks and recreation piers and playgrounds and swimming pools are not unmixed evils despite the delay

in the triumph of Anarchism. In a word, even if we are "Radicals," it is not against the law for us to exercise common sense, to act in the world that is here and now. Because Clark is going to move into a very much better home next Spring, it is not necessarily the height of folly for him to stop the hole in the roof of his present dwelling.

Neither can we wait until all offenders, high and low, against equal liberty are converted, any more than you could wait if that member of the genus, the footpad, should set upon you some dark night in a by-street. - If possible to avoid the delay, you would not postpone defensive action until he had been reformed at some mission or died of whiskey or old age. It is wise to study meteorological charts and watch the weather bulletins and warnings, in order that you may do all possible to protect your crops against late frosts and other untoward weather manifestations, but it might be well for the boy at the same time to be digging the cutworms out of the cabbage-patch or wiring for borers in the apple trees. You possibly may need the cabbages and apples regardless of areas of low or high pressure next Autumn and Winter. It would be ideal if civic conditions could be so greatly bettered at once that there would not be another drunken or otherwise reckless chauffeur, motorman, or teamster on the streets, but until the arrival of that millennial condition you had better look where you are going when pedestrianizing.

In brief, there is a great necessity for taking the long view in the survey of social problems, for planning widely for the future, but before you can get to Chicago or Denver you must pass Peekskill and Albany and Buffalo. The enemies of equal liberty divide to conquer. They whip us in detail. The prostration of the rights of the aggregate is accomplished by the prostration of the rights of the units. Remember that.

Some one has just said, "I am a Radical," in the definition-defying tone sounded by a certain notorious politician when he uttered his famous, "I am a Democrat." To say that one is a radical does not of itself signify that one is—that remains to be seen. The assertion does not necessarily prove that the speaker has any clear understanding of the principle of equal liberty, however afire he or she may be with the spirit of unrestraint. To be radical in the true sense is to be a

seeker for root-causes, and the fierce denunciation of one cause, or supposed cause, of an evil does not carry conviction that the denouncer has made or is qualified to make a patient, inclusive, and searching investigation, or even that he or she realizes that the Upas tree of social wrongs *has* many roots.

The dictionary definition of "radical" is: "Having to do with or proceeding from the root, source, origin, or foundation; forming part of the essential nature; not accidental; fundamental." Hence, "carried to the furthest limit; thorogoeing, unsparing."

In this latter, derived, sense, our friend may be a radical, that is to say, an extremist, and at the same time be most superficial and ineffective in striving to remove an evil, and this largely because his very extremism begets in him a fanaticism that makes him the poorest of diggers for the roots, *all* the roots, of that evil. That very "logical extremism" of which he boasts disqualifies him for balanced, analytical, open-eyed study. It fixes his gaze on the one enemy straight in front, and he pushes on along this line of narrow vision until he finds himself ambushed, surrounded by the flanking allied foes he did not see, that he had no scouts and skirmishers out to uncover and warn him against.

And, too, this intense zeal for the "logical extreme" of what he conceives to be radicalism, a zeal uninformed and undisciplined by wide-reaching and careful investigation, is very apt to make him a flagrant and persistent if unconscious trampler of the equal liberty of his neighbors of different creeds and methods. Talking the other day with a man whom I had had occasion to criticise for his obtrusion of his propaganda on the meetings of other parties, he said to me that evidently I was losing my "missionary spirit." And he added that of course the Socialists and the churches did not like such methods because they could not stand "the truth," but the Anarchists, having "the truth," were prospering by these tactics and were willing that others should distribute what they pleased where they pleased. Meaning that the Socialists should be *forced* by this "direct action" to conduct their meetings as the Anarchists *voluntarily* conducted theirs. Verily, a truly "radical" interpretation of the message of equal liberty!

Behold a ghost from the terrible past! Diaphanous, attenuated, weak, yet unmistakably a shadow-guest from the battle-shambles of Philip of Spain or the torture-chambers of Torquemada. An over-supply of the "missionary spirit," *plus* cocksureness of possession of "the truth," always has played hob with the liberties of heretics and heathens and generally with their lives as well. Every bloody acre of Europe, the Aztec ruins of Mexico, the fallen Inca temples of Peru, all tell us what the conjoining of the "missionary spirit" with "the truth" of which the missionary is the custodian does to the peace and liberty and lives of those who, not having the said "truth," are the heaven-destined material to make the altar-fires that that blessed "missionary spirit" is appointed to kindle.

Freedom of propaganda is an essential element of equality of liberty; no society really is free without it, and freedom of propaganda means, among other things, propaganda at the expense of the propagandist, not at the expense of some one who does not accept the teachings of this propagandist. It is too bad that at this late day such a statement of primary elements of public instruction, of what is and what is not permissible in propaganda, should have to be iterated and reiterated, and especially for the admonition of some woman suffragists and some Anarchist-Communists, women and men who suppose themselves to be in the front ranks of radicalism.

So far, I have spoken of equal liberty only as a to-be-desired social condition, as an essential of peace, security, and happiness. How it is to be safeguarded after it has, in any particular case, been recognized as a principle, is the perpetual problem of human society. There are three chief methods in partial operation or proposed:

1. Law.
2. Public opinion, acting individually and associatively; thru education carried on in the family, by the school, the press, meetings; thru moral force taking the form of ostracism, the boycott.
3. By waiting until *all* become respecters of equal rights. This last is the counsel of perfection, for, no matter what may

be done by heredity and improved environment, it is not conceivable that the fallible by nature can become infallible, perfect, in action; that we shall ever reach a stage where there will be *no* anti-social element.

So it is to education and custom and law that we must look for help. Law, which is merely opinion made formal and legal, is the last resort and, in fact, never comes in a democracy, however imperfect, until education to a greater or less extent has done its work. Thus it becomes our duty to make that preparatory education so many-sided and thoro that the laws which follow education will contain the minimum of error and injustice, will do all that can be done by law to sustain equality of liberty.

Education is the primary, the most important, the greatly preferable agency of reform and defense because it is the atmosphere of initiative, and because it carries less of the threat of force than does custom, the boycott, formal law. Therefore, no matter what other measures of defense of equal liberty we must adopt in crises as they occur, the fundamental work which underlies all and which we neglect at our peril, is ethical education. For, be it understood by everyone, the heart of ethics is equal liberty, that is, equal freedom of opportunity, justice. The ethical concept is the flower of the tree of Evolution. The physical, the mental, the ethical, this is the sequence in development. The man who cries for liberty and justice and at the same time sneers in Stirneristic fashion at ethics, at duty and right, is King in the world of Paradox.

Then, education, initiative, persuasion, reason—these are the agencies of growth that never will fall into desuetude.

But, as until all buildings and their contents, including humans, are fireproof, and the careless and the firebug are no more, we must maintain expensive fire departments, so, socially, government will have a place until that far-away time, if such shall come, when all will as earnestly try to avoid invading others as they defend themselves against invasion. This is true of very few now.

The evolution of a reform: A thought in one mind, then in another mind, in many minds, in the minds of a majority, in the law which that majority enacts. One stage, in itself, is as legitimate as the others, if the reform makes for

the greater security of equal liberty. If it does not, then the first stage is as illegitimate as any of the others.

Therefore, instead of wasting effort in the foolish and futile contention (as many of us have done in some period of our development) that the State, *per sé*, is usurpation, we should devote ourselves to the task of separating the wheat from the chaff, proceeding on the solid fundamental principle that any defensive work the jeopardized or attacked person rightfully may do individually, he rightfully may do in association with his fellows.

The most vital question before the people is that of conservation. It is fundamental, because delay means almost immeasurable loss that cannot be compensated for by any amount of next-century repentance. To wait until education has taught *all* to cease appropriating, and, much worse, destroying, is to work irreparable mischief. The far-seeing man and woman will work thru the agencies now in existence. We have been wickedly spendthrift, suicidely wasteful; we are to-day. Soil, water-power, forests, minerals, birds, are going; in great measure, are gone. The destruction of our birds alone has cost us, is costing us, hundreds of millions of dollars every year. And still the hunters, the boys, the women are almost unhindered in the orgy of cruelty and economic extinction.

Each year nearly 800,000,000 tons of our richest soil, 600,000,000 cubic yards, are washed into the lakes, oceans, and gulf. And the loss increases each year as deforestation sweeps hillside after hillside, mountain slope after mountain slope.

In all these fields some remedial and preventive work, in a few of them much, has been done by aroused intelligence expressed in law. Immensely more remains to be done, and can be done if we will but enlighten our ignorance, arouse from our indifference, and, perhaps most important of all, stop playing shuttlecock with unworkable academic theories while the house burns down over our heads. In the minds of a great many of our most earnest libertarians there is operative a sort of Sullivan Law that rigorously disarms the man who would defend his liberty in a fair and orderly manner but leaves the invasive thug walking about with a portable arsenal.

One more observation while on this part of my theme: With all its very grave faults, the operation of the law is preferable to that of the mob. The mob blocks the streets so that the firemen cannot get to the burning building; the law sends its policemen to clear a way for the fire-fighters and life-savers. The mob seizes the motorman whose car has struck down a child or a man who has been accused of assault and would tear him to pieces without a word of inquiry; the law again sends its policemen to the rescue and so gives opportunity for that fair investigation which is the due of everyone of us charged with a wrong. The mob tortures and burns the Negro whom perhaps only a wild rumor has accused, and after he is dead makes some perfunctory inquiries regarding his guilt. Even in the Southern States, the law is more and more frequently sending its soldiers to see that the person under suspicion has a chance for the life the mob would take from him without trial. In its central purpose, no fault may be found with a concept which would put calmness and order in the place of blind rage and fiendish rioting. The evil lies in our confusion of aggression with defense and in the grave errors of administration. To those familiar with more than a doctrinaire theory, much improvement is manifest on every hand, and greater is rising on the horizon. The principle of liberty, of equal liberty, never before had such serious and hopeful attention.

Of course, no man or woman can work actively in many reforms, for there is not time; but at least it is possible to know something about them and to be friendly instead of scornfully contemptuous when they make for the broadening of the domain of equal liberty. The self-praising jibe for all save one effort is unworthy of any serious worker, and yet such jibes are much more frequently in evidence than are signs of intelligent interest and sympathy. Cannot we do better?

I think I may best close with these few lines from the pen of Henry Russell Miller:

"The noblest sacrifice, because the hardest, is that of the sincere man who gives up a part of his ideal to secure a little of it." . . .

"There are two ways of serving a reform. One is as the preacher, the dreamer. He is useful, because he points out

the way we shall go. The other is as the constructive leader, the man who takes the forces he finds ready to hand and uses their power to change conditions as the people are prepared for change. And he is necessary, because new systems are built on the old and the people are like children, they like coaxing and the encouragement of success. The preacher has the easier task; he has to contend only with ignorance and discouragement. The builder must suffer misunderstanding and compromise—and the temptations of power." . . .

"Perfection isn't attained by one sharp, impetuous dash up the hill. It is a slow, gradual, climb, with many halts and defeats and truces, even retreats."

POST-DISCUSSION REFLECTIONS.

Suggested by some criticisms of certain contentions made or supposed to have been made in the foregoing address.

So, "thru aggression a normal reaction will come?" Then why so objurate the tyrant? According to your philosophy, he is a social necessity, always will be a necessity. But if we establish justice, equal liberty, will this "normal reaction" be *needed*? The arid field gives you the "normal reaction" of famine, of charity. Prevent the effects of aridity by irrigation, and the "normal reaction" of charity ceases to be a *need*.

"Without invasion there is no struggle, no progress." But if there were no invasion there would be no *need* of struggling, no need for progress, for if it is not meant that the struggle is to be *with* invasion, the progress *away* from invasion, what in the name of the English language does the assertion mean? If there were no yellow fever there would be no *need* for struggle against it. The old theological doctrine was that "God," sent all manner of inflictions to "test" us, to give us "strength" to withstand his chastisings. But if the inflictions had not been "sent" upon us we would have had no *need* of the strength to endure them. I have just heard the old theological nescience of the beneficent nature of perpetual evil expounded in the phraseology of modern sociology, and the sound was most dolorous. Imitations always are depressing.

Yes, the past resorted to force, to cruel invasion, but because it did are we to argue that force and invasion are the only, or the best, means of advance to-day? Are science and reason still as weak as they were when men dwelt in caves and ate raw the spoils of the hunt? When I hear *some* arguments, I am tempted to think that such a supposition would be correct, but then I read a work of science and realize that my pessimism was at least partly unfounded.

Yes, many men at many times have done wrong that good might come—as they hoped. Is that any reason why other men or why women who can attain the results they seek without

resort to the old bad methods should step backward a hundred or a thousand years? Continually the old fallacy crops up, as it has a score of times to-night, that two wrongs make a right. Because B stole from A, C is justified in garroting D! What casuistry!

"Human nature is just the same as it always was, and it will always be the same." Does that, if true, necessitate that we continue the methods of the Inquisition, of the Draggonades of Louis, of the butcherings of Claverhouse, of the sacrifices to Moloch? And this that we may develop "character" and "strength!" Save the mark! Would the utterer of this catch-phrase go back, if she could, to Babylon, to Europe in her midnight, to the Morocco of yesterday, or to the Mexico of to-day?

We learn by experience, yes. And so I urged that every-one of us live his or her principles, put his or her profession 'of devotion to equality of liberty into his or her daily actions.

There was found in the latter part of my paper an un-namable something, something that eluded the fixing finger, which indicated declension, a falling away on my part. Probably because it was *there* I laid special stress on the importance of education, initiative, persuasion, and said that force, governmental or other, in defense of equal liberty was the last resort. Of course there was agreement so far as legal force was involved, but gorges rose at the suggestion of the disuse of the "other" forms, at the denial of the right to invade.

Shall we never be done with setting up the child as the exemplar for men and women? In the light of our knowledge of evolution, this idolizing of the undeveloped should be relegated to the scrap-heap. *In utero*, the babe passes thru many of the stages of pre-human development. After birth, its growth is an epitome of primitive human evolution, modified by so much of the acquired knowledge of the later stages of human society as wise parents and other teachers are able to inculcate and such other as it picks up in divers ways, some good, some bad. The child is anti-social to the extent that its teachers and itself fail to make part of its logic of life the social lessons learned by the race. The child is to be left to learn all by experience? But do the exponents of the theory themselves act in consonance with it, fully? Could they? How long

before the babe, wallowing in its own excreta, will, if left alone, learn the value to itself and to others of personal cleanliness? Usually the persons who talk in this way of the non-government of the child are among those who deprecate the failure to give the child a knowledge of its sex-nature and the dangers that threaten it in its ignorance. But why is not this policy of reticence, of silence, wise if it be sound philosophy and prudent sociology to let the child grow up unguided and unchecked, unaided by the experiences and acquisitions of the race that have not become parts of its heritage as an animal? Would you say that an adult savage, brought to the city, should be permitted to manifest such of his savage traits as are malign, anti-social, so that he may by the exercise gain "experience?" No? Why, then, should a young savage, in a different physical but a like mental and moral stage of development, be permitted or encouraged to do what the other is prohibited doing?

With the first cleansing the nurse gives the babe, its progress from primitivism to manhood or womanhood is the road of departure from the filth-bed of unguarded self-expression, its long trek studded with the mile-posts of lessons in civilization, in social amenity, in equal liberty. It is fed at every step from the accumulated stores of human knowledge and ethics. And the more it learns of the life-lessons of the race the better equipped it is to write new and better lessons for those who are to come after.

We get "experience by friction." Does that make friction good, inevitably? The engineer learns something from the friction of the machine he tends, but does that lead him to put sand on the bearings that he may produce more friction and so learn more? On the contrary, does he not use the best lubricant he can find and keep on the lookout for better kinds? And does he not so set up his machine and operate it as to cause the least possible amount of friction in its working? The social application should be apparent without instruction. Social friction gives us "experience," makes us "struggle," but our experience and struggles induce in us a desire to lessen the friction, not to increase it. At least, that is the effect when one is not too zealous a doctrinaire. Is it the argument that when the friction ceases we shall "de-

cay," go to the bad for lack of occupation? But if the friction has ended, we shall no longer *need* that occupation. After the farmer has reforested the hillside, he will not need to spend money and time in keeping the detritus of the floods from covering and killing his crops nor the floods themselves from carrying away his fertile soil. He can devote his saved time and energy to study and intensive cultivation.

You say that man is still a savage beneath the terribly thin veneer of his civilization, and you say it with a greatly triumphant air. Well, what is the lesson you are trying to suggest? Gunpowder will explode and rend and kill. Is that an argument for carrying flaming torches into a magazine filled with unheaded barrels of the composition? Granted that man's self-control is yet lamentably weak, that his feelings so easily snap the loosely woven leash of reason—what do you wish us to understand? If you have the care of a man subject to fits of homicidal insanity will you give him a supply of lyddite bombs, arm him with bowie knife and automatic pistol, and feed his sight and imagination with pictures and stories of torture and slaughter? Is it possible you are mad enough to suppose that *because* man is only partially humanized *that* is an argument for the reckless handling of anti-social intoxicants, for the incitement of sprees of primitive blood-lust, for the encouragement and stimulation of eruptions of the sub-surface beast-man? On the contrary, it is the most solemn warning against any teachings or actions that will excite to a recrudescence of savagery, a recrudescence in which the inciters of it are a little surer to perish before the storm is spent than are those against whom it was directed at first.

Certainly it is curious that so many men and women who are dead set against national armament, against war among nations, should so eagerly spring into the arena in advocacy of civil war, in laudation of invasion as the seed-bed of progress, of aggression as the wet-nurse of "normal reaction," of impudent intrusion into peaceable meetings conducted at the expense of their promoters as a vindication of the principle of equal liberty. And to hear it said that a scrupulous regard on the part of each of us for the equal rights of his or her neighbor is likely to lead to "decay," to mental and moral stag-

nation! Amazing! Is it possible that these critics do not see where their argument leads? That if individual aggression, invasion, is desirable, if cruel social friction is not to be avoided, then it inevitably follows that by so much as war among nations is more intrusive, more invasive, more aggressive, more productive of friction than are individual lapses from kindness and courtesy, then by so much is war more desirable as the stimulator of "normal reaction," as the kindly parent of progress?

The contention was not, as misunderstood by one earnest critic, that the minority should submit to wrongs at the hands of the majority or be scrupulous in respecting the rights of that majority, while the majority is not censured for committing those wrongs. With only two exceptions, the invasions denounced are invasions committed alike by members of the majority and the minority. The plea was for the careful respecting of the rights of all by all. As a matter of fact, tho, we do expect better conduct, *along the line of his reform*, from the reformer than from the man whose actions he assails. It certainly is foolish stultification for him, the man with the brighter light, to deny to others what he claims for himself. If he will not *do* as well as he *talks*, what can he reasonably expect of the man with the poorer light or no light? If for no better reason, he should be too good a strategist to give himself away so cheaply.

APPENDIX

I.

WHAT DOES "FREE SPEECH" INCLUDE?

Editor of *The Globe*,

Sir: During several months there has been much said in *The Globe* by Communist-Anarchists, Socialists, and others concerning the unwillingness of the managers of Socialist meetings to permit the Anarchists to sell their publications and distribute their announcements at these meetings. The Socialists have been charged with illiberality, opposition to freedom of speech, and with tyranny. Socialist writers have denied these charges, but, for the most part, the defence offered has been almost as inconclusive as are the reasons proffered in support of the charges. Neither side has made any serious attempt at an analysis of the issues involved, each writing from the viewpoint of the interest or the supposed interest of his or her party. Perhaps there may be found room for a few suggestions of one who is outside of both camps, and which are called forth at this time by the letter of Doctor Reitman in Saturday's paper.

Doctor Reitman says that as the Socialists will not permit an Anarchist to speak on their platforms and Socialist papers will not allow Anarchist contributions to appear in their columns, "the Anarchists are obliged to go by highways and byways where Socialists gather and attempt to distribute their cards and literature. And invariably they are met with the same tyranny and intolerance."

Let us see what underlies all this. Regarding free speech, these are two inseparable fundamental principles:

1. It is the right of each group to have full freedom for the carrying on of its peaceable, non-invasive propaganda.
2. It is the duty of each group to pay the cost of the carrying on of its propaganda.

Derivatively, if one group is invasive in its methods, it limits the freedom of another group or of other groups. If it does its educational work partially or wholly at the expense of another group or of other groups, it, to the extent that it levies these forced contributions, is *not* paying the cost of its own propaganda.

The question, then, is: Do the Anarchists thus invade the rights of the Socialists, thus compel them to contribute to the expense-fund of the Anarchists? Accepting as true the accounts of their activities given by Doctor Reitman and his associates, these are precisely the anti-libertarian actions of which they are guilty. And I suspect—in some instances, I know—that they do not even have the grace to ask permission to do these things.

If the Anarchists have the right to go into a meeting and appro-

priate a part of the public attention for which the Socialists paid when they hired the hall and met the expenses of advertising the meeting, then, by a parity of reasoning, they would have the right to enter the office and workrooms of a Socialist newspaper, eject an editor or two, push some of the linotypers away from their machines, seize other parts of the plant, and run Anarchist articles into the paper, to be sent out over the country, and all at the cost of the Socialists.

Doctor Reitman should understand that freedom of speech is denied when a society is not permitted to conduct its own meetings at its own cost in its own way. This is the offense of the Communist-Anarchists against the Socialists. By his own account, the Anarchists, not the Socialists, have offended against liberty, in these instances. So long as Miss Goldman and her friends are not interfered with by the Socialists in the management of her meetings, they are not justified in raising against the Socialists the cry of bigotry, tyranny, denial of free speech. All that any group can reasonably and justly ask is that it be not trespassed against in its peaceful propaganda by any other group or by the State acting for another group.

Such are the primary principles of freedom of utterance by voice, pen, and press.

As to the wisdom or unwisdom of the policy of refusing opportunity for discussion on a platform or in a paper, that is an issue quite apart from that of the principle of the equal liberty of all groups and papers to adopt their own methods of work and to ask support from men and women who may give or refuse to give that support as their own judgment and feelings dictate. Perhaps the Socialists would do better if they opened their meetings and papers to free discussion; I think they would. But it is their right to conduct their own meetings and edit their own papers. If they have not this right, then the Anarchists have not the right for themselves. The Socialists become deniers of freedom of expression only when they refuse to the Anarchists or to others the liberty they claim for themselves. I do not understand Doctor Reitman to charge that the Socialists have attempted to control Anarchists' meetings or *Mother Earth*. The charge he does make convicts the Anarchists, not the Socialists.

EDWIN C. WALKER

New York, January 26, 1913.

II.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TOBACCO-DRUGGING

Editor of *The Evening Sun*,

Sir: In the current discussion of tobacco-using, in *The Evening Sun*, one of your correspondents has written of its effect on the ethical

nature. It is well he did, for that is one of the most apparent and offensive effects. The pecuniary and physical effects may be personal matters very largely, and also, perhaps, to a considerable extent, matters of speculation.

But the effects on character are neither in doubt nor confined to the user. As your correspondent has said, no other habit so disastrously corrodes the ethics and manners of the immediate victim and so interfere with the comfort of the remoter victims, those who are brought into close relations with the user of the plant.

That tobacco is so widely used is due to two factors, accident and imitation. Any one of very many other vegetables might now occupy the place of tobacco. But once accidentally picked upon, imitation did the rest. As the numbers using it increase, the influence of imitation is more and more felt. Few, comparatively, have the vigor of will to resist doing what a great many about them do, for the influence of doing is positive, actively suggestive, while the influence of not doing is negative, non-suggestive. Men imitate other men, boys imitate men, and women are now imitating men. The faculties brought into action by habit-formation are the receptive, non-resisting, following ones, not the originating, self-guiding, leading faculties.

Like every other drug-habit, it controls the man, not the man the habit. This is the fact, broadly speaking, and in the measure of the craving for the drug. Of course there are partial exceptions, cases in which the smoker still thinks somewhat of the wishes and comfort of others, or of certain others. While special circumstances may prevent his encroaching, you may know the hold the habit has on his nerves if not on his will when you see him leave an assembly every little while to go out and lessen the tension by further indulgence. But when you see a man in a baker's shop, with food exposed on every side and the room crowded with customers, smoking in utter obliviousness of the enormity of his invasion, even lighting a cigar or cigarette in the face of a woman attendant or a customer; or when he comes into your home with a lighted cigar in his mouth and, with no thought of saying, "By your leave," keeps on smoking, scatters ashes over the floor, or lays the burning stub on a table or shelf, you may know that here is a man in whom the habit reigns supreme, one in whom all ethical sense as regards necessary amenities and certain fundamental rights of others has been wholly killed.

Our Fire Department affirms that a very large percentage of fires are caused by the carelessness of smokers. They will not be careful, they can not be careful, they are inevitably utterly selfish, because in them a drug habit has deadened all sensibility to normal social reactions. How to indulge, how to temporarily appease an acquired craving, initiated by imitation, is the first and last and dominant thought, or rather, feeling.

EDWIN C. WALKER.

New York, March 2, 1913.

III.

In my Sunrise Club paper of the season of 1911-1912 one of the contentions is that the struggle for existence, in some respects lessened in severity by sociological development, in other respects has greatly increased in bitterness and gravity, and that one of the causes of this growing difficulty of the fit to prove their fitness is the reckless waste of nature's gratuities, their extravagant use and wanton destruction.

A recent Bulletin of The American Economic Association contains a very thoughtful essay by Professor H. J. Davenport on "The Extent and Significance of the Unearned Increment." What we are doing now with our heritage and what we (most of us) foolishly expect to keep on doing indefinitely with less and less work and more and more luxury, Mr. Davenport outlines with graphic clearness. And that we, some not very distant day, must put on the brakes he tersely indicates in the attention-compelling closing lines of the excerpts I am making.

" . . . we are to remember that, side by side with the want of the poor, our average standard of living is rising. We are to remember, also, that we are the richest nation of the world—not merely as measured by the colossal wealth of our very rich; not merely by the flamboyant expenditure and the crass ostentation of our great spenders; not merely, also, by the sheer common-placeness of great personal incomes and great property incomes—but also by the test of an extraordinarily high *per capita* productivity of consumable wealth.

"The truth is that no nation of the world out of all the past and no other nation of the present can rank with present America either in opportunities or in accomplishment in wealth production. The average *per capita* product depends in part upon the quality of the human being and in part upon the quality of his environment. As speed in running is partly a matter of the runner and partly of the track, so the productive output is explained by the quality of the farmer and partly by the quality of his farm.

"We actually produce three-fourths of the maize of the world, more wheat than any other country, one-third of the oats, two-thirds of the cotton, one-half of the iron, one-fourth of the gold, three-sevenths of the lead, two-fifths of the coal (and, exclusive of the United Kingdom, more than all the rest of the world combined), three-fifths of the copper, one-third of the zinc, three-eighths of the aluminum.

"That the fertility of the soil is being seriously depleted, the forests nearing exhaustion, the gas already nearly gone, the coal in prospect of exhaustion in one hundred and fifty years, and the artesian water beginning to fail, does not matter to the problem. Nor does it concern the present analysis that every great white way in every

American city is nightly one more chemical orgy of waste, a crime of competitive advertising, for which some day thousands of human beings must shiver for months. Our enormous production still goes on. It ought to represent itself in a generally high-wage level. Instead of this, however, a goodly percentage of our laborers are close to the margin of starvation.

"It is, indeed, an extraordinary outburst of productive achievement which we are witnessing—a combination of productive efficiency with favorable opportunity never paralleled in the past history of the race, and never to be duplicated again in all the years of the long future. No new continent is left to be opened. Modern science and virgin opportunity can never again concur."

Reflecting upon the facts marshalled by Mr. Davenport, I am reminded of the prophecies to which I have listened as they dropped from the glib lips of the sanguine echoers of some doctrinaires' dictum that in the good time coming anywhere from three hours' to thirty minutes' work a day by all adults would suffice to keep the whole population in a state of luxury now possible only for the few exploiters. Why, some of these city farmers could not produce in a week on the best farm in the world enough to pay for the cigars and cocktails that they now think are necessary for their daily existence.

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